(d) The fall in exports of basmati rice occurred due to depressed demand in the importing countries and high domestic prices.

(e) Some of the measures taken to promote export of rice include, inter-alia, conducting publicity campaigns, delegations abroad, participating in International Trade Fairs, inviting potential buyers and providing financial assistance to exporters for improving quality, packaging, brand promotion of products and for conducting market surveys.

Restrictions on Consumer items

866. SHRI SAT1SH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the news item appearing in the Business Standard dated 7th June, 1996 under the caption "Quantitative Restrictions on consumer items to go" have come to the notice of Government; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Export and Import Policy is periodially reviewed for effecting such changes as may be necessary from time to time.

Rehabilitation of Disabled

867. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 1.8 percent of population suffers from either locomotor, speech, hearing or visual disabilities;

(b) whether it is also a fact that approximate 2.5 percent of population suffers from mental disability; and

(c) if so, steps taken by Government to meet this challenge for education, training, financial assistance, employment and rehabilitation in country, particularly, in the State of Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) As per the sample survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 1991, 1.9% of the total population in the country suffers from visual, speech, hearing and locomotor disabilities.

(b) No survey on mental disability was conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation. However, surveys conducted by various organisations indicate that about 2 to 2.5% of the total population in the country suffers from mental disability.

(c) A Statement containing steps taken by the Government for the welfare of the handicapped persons in the country including the State of Punjab is in the Statement.

Statement

Rehabilitation of disabled

(1) *Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the Disabled*

Under this scheme, assistance is provided to voluntary organisations to run rehabilitation programmes for the disabled. It is a comprehensive scheme covering different areas of rehabilitation physically, phychological, social and economic, Financial support is given to the extent of 90% of the total project cost (upto 90% for the rural areas) for recurring items like staff salary, maintenance charges, contingencies and non-recurring items like construction of building, equipment, furniture. Financial assistance is given for the projects such as vocational training centres, special schools, counselling centres, hostels, training centres for personnels, placement services etc.